

Library Construction--What Nobody Will Tell You

1. Remember you are the owner - the architect works for you.
2. Go to each construction meeting.
3. Expect the unexpected.
4. Ask for samples (chairs, light fixtures, large carpet samples, not tiles, etc)
5. Involve staff early and often.
6. Include janitors and maintenance staff in planning your building.
7. Insist on the quality you are paying for - no low-grade substitutions.
8. Plan for what will happen after opening day. The work doesn't stop just because you are open for business.
9. Expect delays in the completing the punch list. Contractors don't get paid for their mistakes.
10. Use the same bulbs in all your lighting fixtures. Do not buy bulbs from Europe.
11. Remember that skylights are great attractive leaking windows, and that today's trendy colors are yesterday's orange shags.
12. Have demonstrations on all operating mechanical units of the library for your maintenance staff as part of your RFP's for bidding these units.
13. Don't install your HVAC system where no one can get to it.
14. Do not have the furniture show up before the carpeting. Do not have the carpeting show up before the painting.
15. Whatever you are planning for technology, think about doubling it.
16. You will make mistakes. Your building will not be perfect. And you will gain weight.
17. Everyone will want a room named after him or her. Choose wisely.
18. Choosing public art sometimes takes longer than building the building.
19. Save all "as built" drawings, warranties and instructions forever.
20. Take pictures from beginning to end.
21. Smile a lot. Opening day will make it all worthwhile!

Presented at the New Jersey Library Conference on April 30, 2001.